Stability and instability in language: Contempopary changes in "Finland's Russian"

Ekaterina Protassova

Russian ideology about language has an imprint on both the previous experience of Russian-speaking immigrants and stereotypes among the metropolitan Russian community.

When the two meet, loaded as they are by general Russian and the new assimilated views, the conflicting interactions reflect the search for linguistic truth: can the Russian language remain Russian without being spoken in Russia?

This study attempts to establish how immigrants with Russian as their dominant language lose some of the grammatical and lexical components of their mother tongue under the influence of the Finnish environment; how they position themselves in the domain of language use, and the perception of this group's linguistic abilities among native speakers of Russian living in Russia.

The degree of language attrition has been documented in oral and written discourses: the self-definition of bilingual speakers is based on data acquired through free and structured oral interviews and via written questionnaires.

Ph.D. Ekaterina Protassova, lecturer at the Department of Slavonic and Baltic Languages and Literatures, University of Helsinki.

Being neighbours, the Finno-Ugrian and Slavic peoples have been influencing each other for centuries. All waves of Russian emigration can be found in Finland, as well as the historical Russian minority whose ancestry is the Russian peasants dwelling on the Karelian Isthmus since the beginning of the 18th century.

Traces of Russian remained after the time when the two countries were part of the same state in 1807-1917, as a result of the wars in the first half of the 20th century and the economic ties in its second half, and are also a consequence of recent migration from the former Soviet Union to Finland.

Russia's Finnish returnees, mostly people with Russian as their mother tongue or as their predominant language, are descendants of settlers whose origins lay in Finland and who have moved to the territory along the Baltic coast (Ingria, Ingermanland, nowadays belonging to Russia) since the 17th century. All these people shape the heterogeneous basis for Russian-Finnish and Finnish-Russian bilingualism. The Russian-speaking population in Finland can be considered as constituting between 31,000 and 65,000 individuals, counted by passport or by language, and they form the country's largest minority linguistic group (the proportion of Swedish-speaking Finns in the entire population is 5.6% and they are not counted as a minority but a second official language group). Old Russians in Finland have been studied, for example, by Baschmakoff, Leinonen (2001), Harjula, Leinonen, Ovchinnikova (1993), Horn (1997), Leisiö (2001), Protassova (2004). Being Finland's largest immigrant group, Russian-speaking people who now live in Finland have had to learn what it means to be part of a minority and to speak more than just one language every day. Both ideas are relatively new to people who were previously citizens of Russia.

About 300 persons from different age groups and waves of migration participated in the present study, the aim of which is to investigate: the influence of background on first language and the extent of culture loss; how this language shift can be enhanced or accelerated by common opinions expressed in the migrants' first and second countries; and the nature of different extra-linguistic conditions for using the language. The first part of the article concerns changes in the Russian language in contemporary Finland, the second part deals with the perception of these changes among other native speakers of Russian living in Russia.

Types of language change among Russian-Finnish bilinguals

The starting point for judging the quality of individual speech which is subject to code-switching (CS) is the generally-popular idea that in the great majority of cases, the languages involved remain separate and subject to their own rules, and that they conform to certain systems that don't allow 'intruders' to exist among what is 'indigenous' with the same rights possessed by the latter. In cases where they do (have the same rights), the 'newcomers' attempt to mimic and behave like the 'citizens'. While some results of interference are considered to be 'better speech' decorated by insertions from a language with a higher status, others might signal a lack of general knowledge (an absence of proficiency in one of the languages or language play in bad taste). Language-variant-containing examples of CS are therefore always a salient variant of this type of language. CS can be understood as including the transference of elements of one language to another at a variety of levels including the phonological, grammatical, lexical and orthographical. An individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages (at the levels of sentences, phrases, parts of discourse, parts of words) during conversations with another bilingual person. The psychological, social and emotional status of communicants influence the degree to which CS is employed, other factors involved are the type of the interaction that is taking place, the history of the communicants' acquaintance and the level of their competence in both languages. Sometimes CS is a mark of solidarity, relaxation or the simplification of communicative rules within a group. The extent to which CS is used depends on who is speaking with whom (family, friends, officials and superiors), where (church, home or place of work) and when (Davies 2003, Gumperz, Hernández-Chavez 1972=2003, Fishman 1965=2000, Heller 1988, Milroy & Muysken 1995, Muysken 2000).

My study derives from previous research conducted by Grojean 1998, Romaine 1995 etc. Peculiarities of Russian language development in bilingual settings have been treated in detail by Meng (2001), and in numerous publications of mine (e.g., Protassova 2003; in press). I will also rely on studies dealing with the Russian used outside Russia (e.g., Andrews 1999; Pfandl 1997; Mustajoki, Protassova 2004; Polinsky 1994; Zemskaja 2001).

Types of code-switching in Finnish-Russian bilinguals of different ages were studied in the following settings: during the play between bilingual children (with different weaker and stronger languages), in Russian shops in Helsinki, in Russian newspapers and journals published in Helsinki; in the Internet forum for Russian-speaking people in Finland; and during interviews. The essence of the findings are that the types of code-switching employed in those settings differ considerably and perform different functions. The data acquired can be also examined from the perspective of the phenomena of attrition. "*Language attrition* […] refers to the gradual forgetting of a language by individual *attriters*, persons who are experiencing attrition. This is distinguished from the longstanding sociolinguistic tradition of research on *language shift*, where the focus is on groups of speakers" (Hansen 2001: 61). This other paradigm for viewing data is better suited to the other part of my research: attrition provides the impulse to think of bilingual speakers as criminals who are spoiling their mother tongue under the influence of a foreign agent – who could perhaps be an enemy. Most of the individuals in the Finland's Russian-speaking population witness that the majority of the cases of attrition or code-switching happen during the process of their acquiring the Finnish language in the first years of their sojourn in Finland, while stable coexistence between the two linguistic systems results in only occasional lexical borrowings.

My data however show that on some occasions, even those bilinguals who attain high levels of performance in both languages and are conscious of the fact that they attempt to maintain a separation between them, unconsciously use Finnish methods of expression, maybe as result of their confluence at the deep level of language production. On the other hand, daily interaction with the dominant surrounding culture means that hesitations and slips of the tongue are characteristic of utterances by people who are non-balanced bilinguals.

The historical changes which took place in the street names in the capital area during the time of autonomy under the Russian Czar

have been studied by A. Reponen. She showed that in 1820, the first toponyms were in fact transliterations of the Swedish names, that in 1836 the names were Russified Swedish names, and that in 1890 they were translated into Russian from Swedish in parallel with Finnish names. In modern Russian spoken in Helsinki, individuals treat urbanomyms differently according to their degree of integration into Finnish life and their attitudes towards discourse in Finnish and Russian (after A. Reponen 2003).

I have observed the following urbanonyms in everyday speech:

- *Kontulovka* < Kontula, *Matveevka* < Matinkylä, *Orexovka* < Pähkinärinne (Fin. *pähkinä* = Rus. *orex* 'nut'). Here the Finnish toponyms are associated with Russian village names. The words with –KI (such as *Helsinki, Linnanmäki*) are declined as plural forms of the Russian toponyms.

- *tusovat'sja na Rautike* (to spend time together near the railway station) instead of 'Rautatientori'. The short slang variant in Finnish is 'Rautis' (the same tendency to transform the Finnish slang ending –IS into the Russian diminutive ending –IK is observed in several other forms such as *Itik* instead if *Itis* from *Itäkeskus*).

- *v Vantee on zhivjot* (modern Finnish Russian) / *na Vande* (Old Finnish Russian) 'he lives in Vantaa / on Vanda'. (The last two letters of the Finnish name Vantaa, the Finnish nominative –AA – correspond to a long Finnish vowel which cannot be pronounced in Russian because the difference is not relevant for unstressed syllables. In the written Finnish variant of the Russian language, both vowels at the end of the word should be changed into –EE, according to the Russian –E for the prepositional case of nouns ending on –A.) In Finnish, location in Vantaa, a town close to Helsinki, demands rection of the adessive case *Vantaalla* which is supposed to be translated as *on Vantaa* (perhaps initially for historical reasons, since the name is identical to that of the river which runs through the town), in Russian it corresponds to the prepositional case. So-called "Old Russians" translate not the Finnish, but the Swedish variant Vanda into Russian, conserving the original rection.

Old Russians usually say that they buy *u Stokmanna* 'by Stockmann', because they really mean the former owner, while Russians who immigrated during Soviet times say *v Shtokmanne* ('in Shtockmann', using the German variant of the pronunciation), and immigrants in the most-recent wave say *v Stokmanne* 'in Stockmann', using the reality that exists nowadays in Russia. (Newcomers pronounce *Fazer* with a Z, not a C: the trademark is now also widespread in Russia with this pronunciation.)

A number of various qualitative adjectives: ***vilkas, reipas, loistava…*** 'active, brave, brilliant'.

On sdelal to, chto nazyvaetsja ***kääntää takkia*** 'He has what they call **turned the coat**'– high-level code-switching, in which a very special idiom is used to show the proficiency of the speaker in the second language. The same thing can happen at lower levels of language proficiency just as a way of showing that someone has acquired a new expression in Finnish.

Finnish words give birth to the **new Russian ones**.

xojtat' < hoitaa 'take care of' (Perhaps in the way of an adopted Finnish manner, not in the usual Russian way of doing things).

juhlavat' < juhlia 'celebrate' (Festivity traditions are different in the two cultures).

chto-to stalo kjul'movato < kylmä 'cold', which the Russian idiomatic expression incorporates.

sjastat', sjastal'shchica < säästää 'economize, save, save up' This may be connected with the different meaning and forms of this type of activity in Finland compared to those in Russia.

justorezka < Fin. *juustohöylä* + Rus. *syrorezka* (after the model of *jajcerezka*, *xleborezka* etc.) 'Cheese-cutter': the everyday reality of buying cheese (the names of products which words written upon them are more likely to be borrowed) is incorporated into an existing composite model (the corresponding object is not common in Russia); the second part of the Finnish word is not in such frequent use and is difficult to pronounce, so the long vowel becomes a short and stressed one; in written language, the words are combined using a hyphen as if it is felt they are from different worlds.

desjatimatochnyj billet < kymmenenmatkanlippu 'a 10 way ticket'. The Finnish *matka* 'way, travel, trip' sometimes provokes a smile when used in Finnish (examples of other Finnish words sounding like Russian words but having a different meaning are: *sisu* 'inner strength' as 'tit', *lippu* 'ticket'

as 'false document', *kokous* 'meeting' as 'coconut'), and derivation from the Finnish word follows the rules for the corresponding Russian word.

lapsik, vauvochka, kul'tik < lapsi 'child', vauva 'infant', kulta 'gold'. The diminutives are built from the Finnish words with emotional endings.

A bilingual can say: *kristallovaja ljustra*, instead of *xrustal'naja ljustra*, 'crystal lamp', producing the word from *kristall*, not *xrustal'*, 'crystal', two different lexemes in Russian.

The next group of incorporations appears to represent **calques**, or **loans**.

Podnjat' deneg instead of *vzjat' deneg* < nostaa rahaa, 'lift up money (from a bank automat ATM)' instead of 'take money'.

Vzjat' lekarstva instead of *prinjat' lekarstva* < ottaa lääkeitä, 'take medicine' instead of 'take in medicine'.

Ja smotrju otsjuda instead of *ja smotrju zdes'* < minä katson tästä, 'I look from here' instead of 'I look here'.

Ja pishu sjuda instead of *ja pishu zdes'* < minä kirjoitan tähän 'I am writing to here' instead of 'I am writing here'.

Radio otkryto, zakroj televizor instead of radio vkljucheno, *vykljuchi televizor* < radio on päällä, laita telkkari pois päältä 'the radio is open, close the television' instead of 'the radio is switched on, switch off the television'.

U menja net speshki instead of *ja ne speshu* < minulla ei ole kiiretä 'I have no hurry' instead of 'I am not in a hurry'.

Ja ne verju instead of *ja ne dumaju* < Minä en usko 'I don't believe so' instead of 'I don't think so'.

Ostanemsja? instead of *My vyxodim?* < Jäämmekö? 'Shall we stay?' instead of 'Are we getting out?' (prior to leaving the bus at a bus stop): this phrase causes true misunderstandings.

U menja xolodno instead of *Mne xolodno* < Minulla on kylmää 'I have cold' instead of 'It is cold to me' (I am cold).

Uxodi proch' instead of *uxodi* < Mene pois 'go away' instead of 'go'. Both variants could be considered as existing in the Russian language, but the first is rather archaic, reactivated through the use of the Finnish postposition particle.

Stavit' < laittaa 'prepare, put, make, get…' replaces different Russian verbs in situations where the corresponding Finnish word can be used.

Chistit' kartoshki instead of *chistit' kartoshku* 'peel potatoes'**,** the plural form instead of the cumulative singular.

Zharit' kotlet instead of *zharit' kotlety*, 'fry croquettes', the partitive case replaces the accusative case.

Kogo 'eti botinki? instead of *Ch'i 'eti botinki?* < Kenen kengät ne on? 'Of whom these shoes are?' Instead of 'Whose shoes are these?', as is common in Finnish (the Finnish language has no special possessive interrogative pronouns).

Sejchas Irina prishla instead of *Vot (prishla / idjot) Irina* < Nyt Irina tuli / tulee, 'Now Irina came / comes' instead of 'Here (came / comes) Irina', the corresponding variant does exist in Finnish, but in this case the speaker chooses another description which is not typical of Russian.

Some scholars (such as Glovinskaja 2004, Osipova 2003) underline the fact that changes in the Russian spoken abroad are the same as those that take place in Russia's Russian, but arrive earlier. This can happen because of international influences, of the generally-weak areas and sections of the language system that are the first to surrender under the influence of another language, or through development in the personality of the speaker, their degree of globalization, democratization, self-esteem etc. I have registered a number of international influences that first appeared in Finnish Russian and are now also intruding into Russia's Russian language: *zhenskij avtor* instead of *avtor-zhenshchina* 'female writer'; *identitet* instead of *identichnost'* 'identity'; *statistiki, reklamy* instead of *statistika, reklama* 'statistics; advertising', a plural instead of the normal singular.

What do Russia's-Russians think about the quality of Russian spoken in Finland?

The Russian language spoken in Finland has not only undergone different changes: they are perceived by metropolitan native speakers of Russian as deviations from the norm, sometimes as violations of it. Such views, when expressed openly, influence the self-perception of Russian speakers living abroad. Some feel humiliated by the fact that somebody dares to say that their Russian is deteriorating, and as a result, that they cease being fully competent in what constitutes their core con-

cept of patriotism (the widespread maxim that "Our home country is the Russian language"), others are happy to throw off the burden of being responsible for everything that the Russian state does by the mimicry of foreign accent and behaviour. In this chapter, I first discuss the conception of the sacerdotal 'native language' (more about this in Protassova 2005). I then attempt to demonstrate the spectrum of views of people who judge their Russian by what Russia's Russians tell them. I start with the Old Russians, the oldest group in terms of age, and proceed to the youngest, people who are studying at different educational institutions in Finland.

a) Russian experience about linguistic norms

Russia is a centralized country, and the Russian language is a centralized language. This means that uttering anything which does not belong to the norm is considered to be either not Russian or bad Russian, or it is thought that the person concerned does not know how to speak Russian even if he or she is Russian by origin and their Russian language has not been in major contact with any other language. Nobody actually knows what the norm is, or who defines it. Often, dictionaries give different variants of pronunciation, and since people are not aware which is the right variant, they prefer to produce a series of alternative variants when they are speaking. Currently, both stress and word-order systems in particular are undergoing major change. But scientists, in spite of common practice, appear to be quite unaware of the wide range of deviations from the norm, and one of the reasons for this is that spoken Russian has not been the subject of proper study. Russia's new language was discussed by large layers of the population as dissemination of the Russian language abroad is still considered to be an important component of foreign policy.

The fact that somebody knows how to say something in a better way makes him look down at the others in a haughty manner. As social psychologists know, the formation of the cultural, behavioural, emotional and intellectual norms that are shared by members of a society serves to develop group equilibrium: deviations from the norm are punished. In spite of this, the great Russian poet A. Pushkin once said that he did not like Russian speech without a grammatical error. It appears he meant it is only natural for people who are speaking their own language to make mistakes. Moreover, people who acquired a language as non-native speakers tend to speak it in a more-conscious and more-regular way than people who developed their language spontaneously.

The normalization of language is a constant process which has to deal with new borrowings, calques, dialects, L2-speakers and so on. Old Russian dialects in central Russia and some Siberian parts of Russia are dying out, and the regional variants of Russian, for instance those spoken in the former Soviet Union, are not considered to be dialects. These factors make speakers of Russian extremely vulnerable to the quality of the Russian language they speak. They are afraid that one day they will start to speak bad Russian and they will not be able to do anything about it. The radio broadcast '*Gramotej*' (literally 'someone who knows grammar very well, a man who can read and write, a scholar'), which discusses problems in good language use and the history of Russian words has the second-highest number of listeners after the news and is listened to by a large audience which includes manual workers and peasants. President Putin's campaigns for study of the Russian language, both as a second language in Russia and as a foreign language abroad, have developed into a national political movement.

Under such circumstances, in which the Russian language is considered to be one of Russia's possessions – a treasure, a holy thing, the symbol of a united people – violations of the norm can be considered a failure to preserve the honour and dignity one of the nation's most-sacred belongings. When these errors are committed by people who live abroad and whose Russian language has been affected by the use of other tongues, their fault towards the mother country is doubled. I must add here that although the learning of foreign languages was compulsory at all schools in the Soviet Union, knowledge of foreign languages was restricted by the fear that prohibited literature would be read and that dangerous ideas would be learned. People who wanted to get a job outside Russia not only had to make an agreement with the authorities, they also had to show that their proficiency in a foreign language was not perfect so that it could not afflict their mother tongue. On the other hand,

the prohibited influences of foreign cultures were attractive, and foreign accents had a romantic aura. One consequence of this was that the wife of the prominent singer V. Vysotsky, the French actress Marina Vladi (born Polakoff), a descendant from the Russian émigrés of the first wave, incorporated another Russianness – the privilege of being able to speak Russian as a mother tongue with an accent.

Nowadays, many speakers of Russian live outside Russia, and Russian people come into contact with people who have lived abroad for a long time and who have lost their Russian language, or whose children have been born in foreign countries and do not speak any Russian. One Russian-speaking woman living permanently in France remarked: "I have met so-called 'Russian-speaking' French people. Let's say seventh descendants of Russians who have studied the Russian language at the Institute for Eastern languages. Not only do they speak with horrible errors, they are persuaded that it's their Russian which is correct. Stubborn people, who believe in their version of the Russian language, and you cannot do anything about it. They are specialists, wow! And the aborigine people are very sensitive towards mistakes foreigners make in the French language, if you don't speak correctly, they are making a grimace" (*www.infrance.ru)*. In Russia, people are usually tolerant towards mistakes committed by foreigners or representatives of the national republics, but not towards their own people. To my mind, the opinion of the 'metropolitan' Russians when they make judgements about the quality of the émigré Russian used by those who have left the country is a significant influence on the latter's processes of self-assessment and self-identification. On the other hand, as Alexandra Estrina puts it, "Parallel acquisition of the two languages is considered as a possible and logical cultural movement for every emigrant. Let's remember the pure and sympathetic old-fashioned Russian of the first émigré wave, by the elder generation and by their children. And it happened regularly on the background of a good knowledge of the language of the country." (*http://telegraf.citycat.ru)*

There are examples of Russians born of Russian parents abroad who speak very bad, almost-incomprehensible Russian; or those who speak a different language, but are interested in contacts with Russian people and frequent a Russian Orthodox church. The Russian writer and film producer Victor Leonidov, who lives in Moscow and has studied Russian emigration in the 20th century, wrote a poem which I would like to quote: "I have of course enjoyed this speech, it was ours, but it was different", and this concerns the language used by Russian emigrants in the first wave and their offspring. Nabokov was once asked about how he could hold on to such a beautiful Russian language, he answered that his language was frozen strawberries. Leonidov has met many old emigrants, and in his opinion their Russian language was that of academicians, from another culture, rooted in the Silver Age, before the ruin of the Russian language. Leonidov admired these people: "There was a certain beauty and sonority in their Russian language, and I cannot explain where exactly".

b) Reflections by Old Russians about their language

Viktor (now 80), born in Finland where he has lived all his life, told me his impressions of Russians in the Soviet Union in the time after World War II: "You know, I went there and I started to work with them, and I came to the conclusion that there was a small difference in our language, even if they always told me that you speak completely as a Russian man and so on, but I felt that we had differences in our language, and there were words which I couldn't understand at least at the beginning, and afterwards I have learned to understand them… And of course there was some difference in the articulation… Now my contacts with the Russian language have ceased long time ago, and I feel that I don't speak Russian as it should be done, that I speak somehow clumsy, pigeon-toed".

Nina (now 80) was born in Finland and studied Russian at university. She went to Moscow for the first time in 1948 to work as interpreter, and said it was a wonderful feeling when everybody around her spoke Russian. She had some practice in language in the Soviet Union after this and was always worried about the quality of her Russian, i.e. whether it was damaged or not, and her teacher of phonetics in Moscow had told her that her language was pure. Her parents were very strict in their language use, they translated everything necessary into Russian and did not allow their children to mix Finnish words into their Russian

discourse, unlike her husband's relatives who blended Russian and Finnish words half and half, so that neither Russians nor Finns could understand them, only people who were bilingual. But still, in Nina's mind, even when Russian emigrants were not translating from Finnish, they spoke Russian which had in some way been influenced by Finnish… Finland's Russians maybe actually have conserved some Russian culture and language that have been lost in Russia itself. When representatives of the first generation of émigrés went to Russia, they were greeted as guests and everyone told them their Russian language was pure… Nina knows some slang words, but she feels sinful and culpable if sometimes she simply does not know a Russian word. She would, for example, like to know more names for plants.

Rita (now 67), born in Finland and having lived the whole of her life here, remembered that when she was working with a delegation of Soviet people they told her that her Russian was classic and dated from the time of the Russian Czars, and that they paid compliments to her about her language and commented that she used some expressions which had already disappeared.

When Maria (now 65), born in Finland and having studied at a Swedish school, went to study in Moscow after World War II, she had no problems with her Russian. But sometimes people did not believe her when she said that she came from Finland. There were some differences in pronunciation, perhaps because Maria's parents originated from St Petersburg, and she was studying in Moscow, so she was told to pronounce D'VER* and not DVER' as they say in St Petersburg.

There were also some things which Russian teachers told schoolchildren at school at that time (no longer) and she ignored, such as having to say "Let's watch a TV programme", not "Let's watch the TV set", because the TV is a box, we are not going to look at a box.

c) The New Russians' reflections about the quality of their language

Olga (now 59, half Russian and half Jewish, 13 years in Finland, married to a Finn): *I do not forget the language. Sometimes, spontaneously, when I write, I replace Russian letters by Finnish, but I always mention it.*

Ilona (now 55, mother – Karelian. father – American Finn, grew up in Karelia, first language is Russian, has a licentiate degree): *I notice that I began to speak Russian worse than before, that I forget the seldom used lexic, (when I speak about theatre, music, arts, I cannot immediately recall the words), because I speak in Russian about domestic things and living conditions, and I read mostly detective stories (in Russian, French and English).*

Vera (now 46, bilingual mother, grandmother spoke little Russian, main language Russian, most important language has become Finnish, husband's mother tongue is Karelian. She has lived in Finland for two years): *I forget some rarely-used Russian words, they are replaced by Finnish words. For example, the word 'bassejn' (swimming pool) was a virtual reality for me in Russia, here it is reality, that's why it is 'uimahalli'.*

Zhenja (now 45, Russian parents, mother – bearer of the literary norm, father – dialect speaker), lives in a Russian family in a multiple linguistic environment (English, Swedish, Finnish) and speaks these and many other languages. She has lived in Finland for 12 years: *With my whole responsibility I can say that there are no changes in my Russian. I don't forget the language. I can only remark that I slightly fall behind with the slang. But I catch up quickly thanks to communication with my nephews from St Petersburg. Even my daughter is proud of her success in slang and after having lived in a summer Russian-speaking camp, she repeats with delight some slang words and phrases. The only scourge that afflicts my speech is its being incrusted with Finnish words. My consciousness splits into two or three here. I understand the damage caused by it (I cannot tell to whom or for what, but this was my Orthodox education), and at the same time, being a philologist, I consider my language 'manifestation' in a relative manner. All sorts of 'lapsilisä' (children's money) and 'tuki' (help), and even 'ravintolas' (restaurants) flutter in my speech. Horrible! But fortunately, as soon as I cross the border, it stops. /…/ I am pessimistic. I have doubts about the possibilities that the third generation can preserve a language which is worthy of the name 'Russian'. I have students 'with a Russian grandmother'. There are a couple of proverbs and a Russian family name, and this is the maximum extent of their 'Russianness'. Even teenagers of*

the second generation who were born back in Russia, when they communicate, I am frightened by what sounds like pidgin language instead of Russian, with endings swallowed up, reduced consonants, seeded with Finnish words. It reminds me of babbling by psychiatric patients (this is not a metaphor, I think that the distortions of speech in these cases are of a similar nature). I don't even believe in conscious efforts – I think they won't be enough for one generation (that is, for 'children'). Also, the majority of Ingrians that I know are worried about the assimilation of their children in a much wider way than just about their Russian language. And this is understandable. And this is RIGHT. Even if almost everyone puts their children into the 'mother-tongue' groups at school. But these children won't put their children into such groups.

Igor (now 43, born in central Russia, married to a Finnish woman, has lived in Finland for 12 years): *It seems to me and sometimes I find evidence that my language lags behind, it is like in a tin. If I don't go to Russia for a long time, the language there changes. I am rescued by television, books, I have a reading plan for some years ahead.*

Galina (now 40, has lived in Finland for five years): *The quality of my Russian was always underlined at school and later. I don't mention any changes in my Russian, I try to maintain it at a good level myself as well as with my children. I hope I am not going to forget Russian. Unfortunately, my children start to lose it, drop by drop, it goes. I am trying to stop this process, I hope with some success. They read in Russian more than in Finnish, there are lots of Russian books and videocassettes, CDs at home… If children have forgotten a word in Russian, I remind them of it, I give them synonyms.*

Elsa (now 40, has lived in Finland for 11 years): *When I lived in Russia, I spoke Russian less than now, because I was an interpreter and a guide, I had to speak a foreign language for 8-12 hours each day. One poet told me: "My language doesn't change, it's the language in Russia which changes".*

Raja (now 35, married to a Finn, two children, educated as a schoolteacher in Russia): *There are some changes in my Russian, because in conversations with Russian immigrants in a similar position to me we often use Finnish words, the languages get mixed up. Children mix Russian and Finnish words all the time, even though I always insist that they speak either only Russian or only Finnish. But myself, I am not always following this rule. Many Russian words become forgotten, and this is not 'window-dressing'. Earlier I thought, well people go abroad, and after a couple of years they start feigning that they have forgotten their mother tongue: How do you say that in Russian?" But it really is so, and I became convinced of it while living here.*

Xenia (now 36, has lived in Finland for eight years because her husband has been invited to work as a scientist in Finland), answering the question "Does the fact that you live here somehow influence your Russian language? Do you speak somehow different or in the same manner as before?" *I think it depends on many factors; for instance how many Russian friends do I have here? How often do I communicate with my relatives? How often do I go to Russia? We have a Russian family who live here as acquaintances, they haven't yet been to Russia with their daughter who is now six years old … Here she speaks in Russian to both her parents and her grandmother who also lives here. But we often go to Russia with our children… And our parents come to visit us here… If you read books… I don't think that my Russian language has changed much, but there is maybe some stamp … On recent occasions when going to Russia I noted that I want to say what I need to say in Finnish, I don't know why. I almost open my mouth and then I remember: "Oh, it's much easier here, and I can speak in Russian". And sometimes I just need to speak my second language [which is Finnish] with somebody.*

Nelli (now 38, half Russian and half German, has been living in Finland for five years, married to a Finn): *When I go to Moscow, I say "Thank you", "Could you be so kind", Wouldn't you…" And they make such big eyes.*

Russian students aged between 20 and 30 discuss why they are different from their Russian friends in Russia and the reasons for their becoming different. Firstly, it is non-Russian behaviour: the absence of gestures, pauses, the silences typical of Finns. Secondly, the absence of up-to-date information makes them feel as if they were provincials. Thirdly, the persistent attention to ecological problems, the impossibility of throwing a dirty piece of paper onto the ground,

smiles, politeness and civility are all distinctive characteristics of Russians living abroad. They often hear: ”You are so quiet, I thought you might be living abroad. Why are you smiling – there’s nothing here to be laughed at. Are you Russian? Why do you speak Russian so badly? How long have you lived in Finland? And so, this was enough time for you to forget the Russian language? Your intonation is completely different.”

Alina (now 28, married to a Finn, has lived in Finland for five years, born in Kazakhstan, immigrated to Finland from Karelia where she studied foreign languages at school - Finnish among them - and subsequently at Petrozavodsk University): *In total isolation, terms are forgotten, neologisms are absent, understanding is slightly hampered. I force myself in particular to read newspapers and to listen to the radio and television. Nobody told me that I would forget the language. It is sometimes also difficult to understand new slang words.*

Marina (now 26, has lived in Finland for ten years): [Writes in Russian with errors, and their quantity has not changed after she moved to Finland.] *In my language appeared words understandable only to those who live in Finland: kirpushnik, vajpy, and approximately ten other Finnish words that became tightly bound to my Russian. Sometimes I catch myself forming the idea that if I can replace a phrase of 2-3 words in Russian with one Finnish word, I will do so. But this only happens at home, in conversations with my husband. Sometimes there are things that I know primordially in Finnish and there are difficulties in translating them into Russian, it’s hard to find analogues.*

Sasha (now 20, studies in Finland and has lived there for four years): *It is not interesting to speak to Russians who have lived here for a long time because they change, they become like Finns. Youngsters of my age are a huge contrast, I suffer culture shock. In principle, they know little. Their picture of the world is different, their communicative manner is different. They know little – their general level of development is even lower than mine. I know only one Russian who studies at university, education has little attraction for them. At the age of 30 they are still studying, and are somehow not ashamed of it. They read little, they haven’t even read the literature that is usually read at school. They lack something which would make them into interesting persons. I feel a tension: they are silent for long periods, and then they say something that is not interesting at all, that doesn’t carry any information at all. In Moscow, things are going swimmingly. Here, they have Finnish conversational habits. Many who have lived here for a long time haven’t been to Russia and have old-fashioned and therefore false notions. They don’t speak with their own words, but with the words of their parents… In Moscow, I am told I am a spy, and some say that I am not Russian. My parents say I have acquired an accent. I am very fearful of this, I would very much like not to speak with an accent.*

Irina (now 20, has lived in Finland for 13 years, has a perfect command of many languages): *When I was child and we hadn’t been to Russia for a long time, my Russian language was always rusty, but I now make efforts to maintain my language in the best way that I can.*

When asked about the quality of their Russian, people usually answer that in principle, their language doesn’t change, but changes that do occur are enumerated as follows:

- The language in Russia changes, I cannot follow it properly;
- So many thing happen in Russia, one must live there on a regular basis or permanently in order to keep up-to-date;
- I behave more and more like a Finn, even if I return to Russia, I will be different;
- Finnish words enter my Russian, sometimes I don’t know how to translate them into Russian, sometimes I play with them, sometimes I think in Finnish constructions, sometimes I have no energy or will to do anything about the situation;
- Anyhow, my language will not change tremendously, but I must do everything for the Russian of my children; what a pity it will be if they are unable to speak it properly.

Most of the changes are perceived at personal level: people are changing, their way of life is changing, as are spontaneous reactions and verbal behaviour. Sometimes, language is even perceived as being an ideological part of the individual: if you lose language, you lose the ideology.

Conclusions

Code-mixing, code-blending and hybrid linguistic phenomena are

used to demonstrate that two languages (in this case Russian and Finnish) are no longer kept separate, but it is not clear at which point bilingual speakers really lose control over the capacity to control their own speech production and become unable to distinguish the so-called ”norm”. At the same time, bilingual speakers vary considerably in the extent to which they learn to read and write in their second language. As the question of what is the ’norm’ is a vivid one in public discussion inside Russia concerning the Russian language, even though Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland clearly feel that their language deteriorates or does not develop quickly enough to keep pace with new developments in Russia, the reasoning that lies behind code-switching and the methods of its employment in the Russian used in Finland demonstrate that it remains a fully-functional and creatively-used language.

Are the changes in the Russian language used by Russian people living abroad due to the lack of contact with different layers of modern Russian, the influence of the dominant language of their surroundings, or both of these? Is it really true that after all the years of the Soviet regime, Russians have lost touch with their Russian? Is it really so that the maintenance of Russian is not important to the fourth (i.e. the modern) wave of Russian-speaking immigrants?

As can be seen, some people are influenced more easily by the environment and try to abandon their mother tongue as quickly as possible. On the other hand, mixed language is often one of the functional variants of Russian that immigrants use. My observations allowed me to suppose that while the self-identification of Russians belonging to the first and fourth wave of Russian immigrants in Finland might be different, the processes that their Russian language undergoes are in fact the same.

Their language cannot maintain a standard, it is open to influences from Finnish and any other languages that they use frequently, and although they are easily persuaded that they themselves change, not all of them want this to happen.

The metalinguistic abilities of native speakers play a role which is far from negligible: inter-language identification, judgments of individuals about the linguistic specificity of their speech, the wish to conserve their level of language proficiency and communicative competence, and their efforts to organize a positive milieu for use of the first language make it possible for a person to remain a good native user of one’s first language.

Nevertheless, the level of the first language is largely determined by the age at which a person changes their linguistic environment, the duration of one’s sojourn in a foreign-language society, opportunities for use of the mother tongue, the quantity and quality of the literature that is available and production by the mass media.

Opinions of ’metropolitan’ Russians range all the way from admiration for ’Old Czarist Russian’ to disdain for those who have not been able to maintain the mother tongue at what they consider to be the required level.

References

Andrews, D. (1999) Sociocultural perspectives on language change in diaspora. Soviet immigrants in the United States. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia.

Baschmakoff, N. & Leinonen, M. (2001) *Russian life in Finland 1917-1939*. Helsinki: Institute of Russia and Eastern Europe. [=Studia Slavica Finlandesia, t. XVIII]

Davies, A. (2003) *The Native Speaker: Myth and Reality*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J.A. (1965 = 2000) Who speaks what language to whom and when? In: Wei, L. (ed.) *The bilingualism reader*. London: Routledge, 2000, 89-106.

Glovinskaja, M.J. (2001) Jazyk ’emigracii kak svidetel’stvo o neustojchivyx uchastkax jazyka metropolii [The language of the emigration as an evidence of the unstable places in the metropolitan language]. In: Kapanadze, L.A. (ed.) *Zhizn’ jazyka. K 80-letiju M.V. Panova* [The life of language. Towards the M.V. Panov’s 80th anniversary]. Moscow: Jazyki russkoj kul’tury, 42-59.

Grojean, F. (1998) Studying bilinguals: methodological and conceptual issues. Mental control of the bilingual lexico-semantic system. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 1, 131-149.

Gumperz, J. & Hernández-Chavez, E. (1972 = 2003) Bilingual code-switching. In: Harris, R. & Rampton, B. *The language, ethnicity and race reader*. London: Routledge, 291-302.

Hansen, L. (2001) Language attrition: the fate of the start. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 21, 60–73.

Harjula, T.; Leinonen, M. & Ovchinnikova, O. (eds.) (1993), 1993 *Kyyrölän perinnetta. Tradicii Krasnogo Sela*. Tampere.

Heller, M. (ed.) (1988) *Codeswitching. Anthropological and sociolinguistic perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Horn, F. (1997), Russians in Finland. In: Pentikäinen J., Hiltunen M.(eds.) *Cultural minorities in Finland. An overview towards cultural policy*. Helsinki, 183-199. [=Finnish National Commission for UNESCO, N 66]

Leisiö, L. (2001), *Morphosyntactic convergence and integration in Finland Russian.* Tampere: Tampere University press.

Meng, K. (2001) Russlanddeutsche Sprachbiografien. Untersuchungen zur sprachlichen Integration von Aussiedlerfamilien. Unter Mitarbeit von E. Protassova. Tübingen: Gunter Narr. [=Studien zur deutschen Sprache 21].

Milroy, L. & Muysken, P. (eds.) (1995) One speaker, two languages: cross-disciplinary perspectives on codeswitching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mustajoki, A. & Protassova, E. (eds.) (2004) *Russkojazychnyj chelovek v inojazychnom okruzhenii* [A Russian-speaking person in an other-language-speaking environment]. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino. [=Slavica Helsinguensia 24]

Muysken, P. (2000) *Bilingual Speech. A typology of code-mixing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Osipova, M. (2003) Sovremennyj russkij jazyk v SSHA: social'no obuslovlennye paralleli razvitija [The modern Russian language in the USA: socially determined developmental parallels]. In: Krysin, L.P. (ed.) *Russkij jazyk segodnja 2* [Russian language today], Moscow: Azbukovnik, 502-510.

Pfandl, H. (1997) Normabweichungen und Regelverstöße bei Emigrant(-inn)en mit Russisch als Erstsprache und Lernenden des Russischen als Fremdsprache: Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten. In: Huber, D., Worbs, E. (Hg.) *Ars transferendi. Sprache, Übersetzung, Interkulturalität. Festschrift für Nikolaj Salnikow zum 65. Geburtstag*. Frankfurt/M., 373-394.

Polinsky, M. (1994) Russian in the U.S.: An endangered language. [typescript]

Protassova, E. (2003) Russisch und Finnisch: zweisprachige Migranten in Finnland. In: Reitemeier, Ulrich (Hg.) *Sprachliche Integration von Aussiedlern im internationalen Vergleich*. Mannheim: amades, 201-220.

Protassova, E. (2004) *Fennorossy: zhizn' I upotreblenie jazyka* [Fennorosses: the life and the language use] St Petersburg: Zlatoust.

Protassova, E. (2005) Elaborating on Finnish-Russian bilingual identity in oral and written discourse. In: Cohen J., McAlister K.T., Rolstad K., MacSwan J. (eds.) *ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism.* Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, 1874-1892.

Protassova, E. (in press) Russian as a lesser used language in Finland. To appear in: Cornillie, B., Lambert, J. & Swiggers, P. (eds). *Linguistic identities, language shift and language policy in Europe*. Orbis / Supplementa. Leuven – Paris: Peeters.

Reponen, A. (2003) Istorija xel'sinkskix toponimov [History of the Helsinki-toponyms]. *Literarus* 2, 15-19.

Romaine, S. (1995) *Bilingualism.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 2nd ed.

Zemskaja, E.A. (ed.) (2001) *Jazyk russkogo zarubezh'ja: obshchie processy i rechevye portrety* [Language of the Russian emigration: general processes and linguistic portraits]. Moscow: Jazyki russkoj kul'tury.